



The Advocate

Celebrating Ombuds Day, October 8, 2020!

**Ombuds: Unusual name.
Important service.**



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Shambra Mulder, Ph.D.

Office of the Ombudsman and Administrative Review

In celebration of Ombuds Day 2020 and Secretary Friedlander's plan for us to "Build Back Better," I am especially pleased to honor all of the Ombudsman and Administrative Review (OOAR) accomplishments. With Ombuds Day fast approaching on October 8, 2020, I am looking for ways to promote our work, and everything you have accomplished.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and growing need for services, you have assisted more Kentuckians than ever before. No where is this more evident than in the number of contacts you are handling. Consider this: the **Complaint Review Branch** now regularly handles 7000 contacts each month from Kentuckians since our COVID-19 response started in March, 2020. The **Quality Advancement Branch** implemented a new Critical Incident Reporting system to improve collaboration and coordination between agencies in identifying and removing adult perpetrators in caretaking roles. The **Division of Administrative Hearings** is working diligently to conduct virtual hearings to address the ongoing need for administrative appeal hearings. The **Division of Program Performance** will conduct virtual interviews through December, 2020 in lieu of face-to-face interviews. Overall, the Office of Ombudsman has been able to operate at the same level of excellence by being innovative and flexible during this time. Thank you!



Statewide Announcement:

After Sept. 28, 2020, Kentucky public schools may hold in-person classes. Governor Beshear, Lt. Gov. Coleman and others announced a new COVID-19 dashboard on September 14, 2020, specifically related to schools and universities. It is available on the kycovid19.ky.gov web site. Parents should check with their districts about any changes to the school calendar.

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Word of the Month

Resilience — *The ability to cope when things go wrong.*

- Bouncing back after difficult times;
- Dealing with challenges and still holding your head up;
- Trying your best;
- Being strong on the inside;
- Being able to cope with what life throws at you and shrug it off.

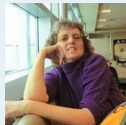


Employee spotlight:

Debbie Cardwell

Debbie and her family have long roots to Frankfort! Her great-grandfather owned a farm along Cardwell Lane that now bears her family's name.

She joined the Division of Administrative Hearings as our receptionist 2 years ago, after a successful 27-year career at several Kentucky State offices, including the Energy and Environment Cabinet.



Debbie was always the first to greet you as you came through the door with a huge smile and "Hey!" During the COVID crisis, she has adapted her processes to transfer mail and calls efficiently.

Debbie has a wide range of interests: reading, listening to music (she loves Queen and Freddie Mercury), traveling, and astronomy. She studied art in college and likes Japanese art.

Division of Administrative Hearings: LaToya Payne, Director

The Division of Administrative Hearings (DAH) comprises two Administrative Hearings Branches: Health Services (Health Services) and the Families and Children's Administrative Hearing Branch (Families and Children). The Families and Children's branch receives an estimated 3,800 CHFS appeal requests annually involving Food Stamps, Medicaid, KTAP, Child Support Enforcement, and Protection and Permanency appeals. The Branch is committed to the impartial adjudication of the administrative hearing issues regarding all of these appeals. It is served by a Branch Manager, 10 Hearing Officers, and 9 administrative staff.

Health Services averages about 1,500 appeal requests each year related to CHFS actions originating from the Office of Inspector General, Department for Medicaid Services, Department for Public Health, Department for Aging and Independent Living, and the Department for Community Based Services. It consists of an Assistant General Counsel/Attorney Manager, 11 Staff Attorney Hearing Officers, and 5 administrative staff. Both branches have rallied while working from home to continue providing expedient and fair hearings for Kentuckians all over the Commonwealth.

"The Division of Administrative Hearings is a conduit between the Cabinet and members of the public affected by CHFS agency decisions. Through our work, we give Kentucky citizens a voice. We also determine whether agency actions were made fairly, appropriately, and in compliance with the applicable law. Often the most valuable service we perform is helping individuals understand why a determination was made as it was. Attention to administrative hearing process trends also enables the Cabinet to craft important legislation and regulations that further its mandate to serve the public." *Rebecca Baylous*, Assistant General Counsel/Attorney Manager at HSAHB.

Get Your Flu Shot!



SUBMISSIONS ALWAYS WELCOME —

Please email

carolyn.vose@ky.gov with your articles and ideas!



REMINDERS — VOTE!!!!

In-person on Nov. 3, 2020, or Oct. 13 - Nov. 2, or request an absentee ballot by October 9, 2020:

<https://vrsws.sos.ky.gov/abrweb/>

Open Enrollment for 2021

benefits is Oct. 12—28, 2020.

Several webinars are scheduled

Oct. 1—9, 2020 on the Kentucky

Personnel web page: [https://](https://personnel.ky.gov/KEHP/2021%20Virtual%20Benefit%20Fairs.pdf)

personnel.ky.gov/KEHP/2021%20Virtual%20Benefit%20Fairs.pdf.

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PLEASE SIGN UP

NOW! The Kentucky Employees Charitable Campaign needs your help. Please set up payroll deduction via KHRIS today.

<https://khris.ky.gov/iri/portal>.

ALSO — Please email your suggestions to Dr. Mulder at smulder@ky.gov for OMB and DAH 2020—2021 KECC fundraising ideas. An online auction or "Trunk or Treat" event have been suggested. Please email your ideas to Dr. Mulder at smulder@ky.gov. **Everyone's input and participation has been requested.**